



SOUTH MOLTON
RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

AND THE

SANITARY INSPECTOR

FOR THE

Year Ending December 31st, 1939.

W. GRADDON MORTIMER,

Medical Officer of Health.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR THE SOUTH MOLTON RURAL DISTRICT

GENTLEMEN,

The Ministry of Health has given instruction that only a very brief Report is required for the year 1939.

I have not received from the Registrar General any note of Vital Statistics so I have omitted to give them.

There has been nothing of an exceptional nature in our area beyond the fact that the War has caused a cessation of many necessary improvements in Water Supplies and in Sewerage Schemes and Housing.

The Council had it's first experience of Evacuees in September. All the billets were readily provided and the Children in the billets well fed and looked after.

They arrived between 5 and 6 p.m. and then were medically inspected—this was not a very thorough inspection—only those who were ill or had developed some symptom of illness during the journey down. This took sometime, they then had to be taken by Bus to the Villages where they were billeted. They were then given a meal and a good deal of clerical work appeared to be necessary before the children were ready for their new homes.

They then had to be taken by car—or if their billets were near they just walked—to their homes.

The Children were then tired out.

The Medical inspection business could have been largely avoided by a thorough inspection the day before, and careful notes taken, and anything futher needed could have been done on the way down.

NOTIFIABLE INFECTIOUS DISEASE OTHER THAN MEASLES.

1939 has been a good year as far as the above diseases go, only eleven cases were notified and of these—

- Six were Scarlet Fever (2 of them a Mother and her infant)
- 2 Meningitis.
- 2 Acute Influenza Pneumonia.
- 1 Typhoid Fever.
- 1 Puerperal Pyrexia.

The Typhoid was an imported case from the Metropolis and undoubtedly the patient had acquired the disease before she arrived in our area. The case was very carefully nursed and all precautions taken, and there was no spread of the disease.

Of the Scarlet Fever cases, 3 were removed owing to lack of isolation facilities. As I have reported, this complaint can very often be successfully isolated at home.

The cases of Meningitis were infants, one of 9 months—fatal, the other older recovered.

MEASLES.

Twenty nine cases of Measles were notified.

Measles practically never occurs in infants under 3 months owing to Maternal Transmitted Immunity.

Highest mortality—Children under five years.

The notification of Measles as a means of checking the spread of the disease is of little value.

Considering Measles is most fatal under five years of age it is obviously important to postpone by any possible means the age at which children are attacked, and, to obviate infection in the winter months.

Short of any means of immunization the means can only be achieved with very partial success by methods such as quarantine, and **Infant School closure when Measles are an epidemic.**

The Education Authorities are as a rule against closing schools

TUBERCLE.

There were Nine fresh cases notified in 1939.

The ages were :—

Nine months	Male	Pulmonic Lungs	Died 2/9/40
4½ months	Male	Non-Pulmonary Abdomen	Died 29/3/40
17½ years	Girl	Lungs	Died
23 years	Female	Lungs	Died
30 years	Female	Lungs	
31 years	Female	Lungs	
49 years	Female	Lungs	
70 years	Female	Lungs	
Age not given	Female	Abdomen	

These were at the end of 1939. 25 cases on the Register,
21 Pulmonary, and 4 Non-Pulmonary

WATER.

The new Water Supply Schemes at Witheridge and at Bishopsnympton are still badly needed.

The infiltration of Evacuated Children and of people from dangerous areas, and in many cases of Soldiers puts an extra strain on our Water Supply Systems. We have however weathered 1939 better than we expected and there has been no disease caused from any defect in our Water Supply Systems. All water-borne diseases are diarrhætic in character.

The Housing position is clearly stated in the Sanitary Inspector's Report.

A. R. P.

As Medical Officer of Health the Casualty Service of A.R.P. is under my charge.

A complete system of First Aid cannot be established in a rural area without a great deal of work and help, but a system is gradually being evolved which will, I beleive prove efficient. If this is so, and I trust it is the case, the best wish I can give them is, "may they never be wanted."

With many thanks to the Clerk and Mr. Oxland for their assistance.

W. G. MORTIMER, F.R.C.S.E.

VITAL STATISTICS.

Population Resident—(a) 8942. (b) 8951.

Live Births—Total, 60 males; 50 females. Legitimate—56 males; 49 females. Illegitimate—4 males; 1 female.

Still births—Total, 6 males; 1 female. Legitimate—5 males; 1 female. Illegitimate—1 male.

Deaths of Infants under one year of age—Total 6 males; 1 female. Legitimate—6 males; 1 female. Illegitimate—Nil.

Total Deaths 116. 66 males; 50 females

Chief Causes—Heart Disease, 16 males; 8 females.

Other Circulatory Diseases—5 males; 5 female.

Cancer—3 males; 6 females.

Pneumonia—5 males; 2 females.

1 Case of Suicide

Cerebral Hemorrhage—5 males; 8 females.

Tuberculosis—Nil.

Respiratory—2 female; 3 Male. Non-Respirations—Nil.

Senility—2 males; 6 females.

Death Rate—116 in 8950 in 1000

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SANITARY INSPECTOR AND
SURVEYOR FOR THE SOUTH MOLTON RURAL AREA,
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st. DECEMBER, 1939

WATER.

Difficulties have arisen with regard to the proposal to introduce a new supply for Witheridge, and nothing of a concrete nature has yet been decided on. It is essential that an early decision be made concerning this matter, as during a normal summer, a grave shortage is experienced.

The treatment works in connection with the augmentation scheme at Bishopsnympton have not yet been constructed. A scheme has been prepared for a piped supply of water for the village of Burrington, to be obtained from a borehole, but owing to the advent of war conditions, no steps have as yet been taken for its execution.

Investigation are being conducted into the augmentation of the supply at Rackenford, as the existing borehole has proved incapable of producing a continually satisfactory yield. The preliminary works in connection with the proposal to afford a piped supply of water to the village of Georgenympton, has, owing to the advent of war conditions, been temporarily abandoned.

An extension of the main at Chulmleigh has been made for the purpose of providing for rehousing development.

Particulars of work done in connection with water supplies during the year are as follows :—

No. of inspections carried out in connection with private supplies	137
No. of samples taken from existing supplies	23
No. of water supplies to existing houses improved	9
No. of supplies taken into existing houses from public mains	9
No. of visits to and inspections of public water supplies.....	174

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

Apart from a short extension of the sewer at Chulmleigh, executed in connection with a rehousing scheme, no sewerage works have been carried out during the year.

Particulars of drainage work carried out during the year are as follows :—

No. of new drains laid to existing houses.....	33
No. of extensions to drains.....	7
No. of drains cleared..	7

Closest Accomodation.

No. of new closets constructed	23
No. of earth closets and privies converted to water closets.....	18
No. of new closet pans fixed	29
No. of new flushing cisterns provided	24

PUBLIC CLEANSING.

No new development has taken place during the year, and the position remains the same as reported on last year. 23 inspections have been made in connection with refuse disposal.

NUISANCES.

Six complaints relating to nuisances were received during the year, and were dealt with as follows :—

Abatement obtained in five cases as the result of informal action, and in one case, as the result of statutory action.

ERADICATION OF BED BUGS.

No premises were found to be infested with bed bugs, and it is unlikely that any such premises exist in this area.

SCHOOLS.

There are 29 schools in the area. Several visits have been paid, and in three cases, defects were found. Two cases were remedied as the result of informal action, and one case remains outstanding.

DISINFECTION.

Six premises were disinfected as the result of the occurrence of notifiable infectious diseases, and in two further cases, premises were disinfected as the result of tuberculosis.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

MILK.

155 samples of milk have been examined for cleanliness during the year, out of which, 133 reached the required standard. All these samples were taken at farms at the time of production. The percentage of passes is 85.81 as compared with last year's percentage of 79.26 and that of the year before of 63.36.

224 inspections of cowsheds have been made, and improvements to these are constantly being effected.

SLAUGHTERHOUSES AND MEAT.

There are 10 slaughterhouses in the District, 7 registered and 3 licenced, and 39 inspections of these have been made.

The following meat has been condemned as unfit for human consumption :—

Beef—1048 lbs. affected with tuberculosis, and 200 lbs. as the result of other diseases and conditions.

Pork—120 lbs. affected with tuberculosis.

Mutton—8 lbs. for diseases and conditions other than tuberculosis.

Offals—30 lbs. as the result of tubercular affection, and 50 lbs. as the result of other diseases and conditions, giving a grand total of 1816 lbs.

BAKEHOUSES.

There are 12 bakehouses in the District, which have been kept in a sanitary condition, and there has been no complaint concerning them.

HOUSING.

No further areas have been declared as Clearance or Improvement Areas during the year, and no demolition orders have been made.

The position in this area is that with the completion of the Chulmleigh rehousing scheme and the houses in course of erection at Rose Ash, all the rehousing to meet the requirements of confirmed Clearance Orders and individual demolition orders, will have been completed.

Nine houses have been demolished during the year as the result of previous action, but in accordance with the suggestions of the Ministry of Health, the houses in Clearance Areas are being allowed to stand temporarily. 131 houses have been repaired as the result of informal and statutory action.

One case of overcrowding was reported, and has been remedied by the family, which is a large one, being provided with a second house.

Nine houses have been reconditioned under the Housing (Rural Workers) Acts, making a total of 99 houses reconditioned under these Acts.

Ten working class houses have been completed by the Council during the year, and four by private effort.

A. G. OXLAND, A.R.S.I., M.S.I.A.

